

5

■ Sex Roles, Power, and Identity

In the jail he lies on his cot
Staring at the ceiling,
Cigarette hanging from his mouth,
in his blue uniform.
Ain't he a man? everyone said.

—Mike

And another woman has the baby,
lives there, inside the diapers and days of babysitting
so that her boyfriend can go out into the world
toward a future, which she had to forget.

—Anonymous

RATIONALE

What Is the Topic of Study?

This unit will focus on the different roles that men and women play in society and in personal life. We will examine what it means to be male or female in different social contexts. Students will bring up the issues of both power and identity as we analyze our own observations and discuss real and fictional characters.

We address these basic questions: How are gender and power related? What powers are girls supposed to have? What powers do they have? What powers are boys supposed to have? What powers do they have? We will look at the relationships between the sexes in our society and examine the ways power affects those relationships as well.

Why Will Students Be Interested in Studying This?

This is a hot topic that most definitely will engage students. They will be allowed and encouraged to talk about their collective social lives and to register complaints about some of the different injustices they have seen and felt. There will be enough references to student observation (regarding gender stereotypes, division of labor, and male and female images in the media) to sustain even uninterested students. We will talk about what they know and about the power and abuse of power they have felt. We will talk about male and female identity as they struggle to create their own.

Why Do Students Need to Study This?

Both male and female students will take a good look at the stereotypes and roles they accept. They may be physically mature but probably have not had the opportunity to question the gender stereotypes dictated by society in general and by their own individual cultures in particular. The peer pressure to play into these sex roles is overwhelming. Students live in a world in which girls need to be sexually attractive and available without being too promiscuous. They know that physical abuse is a possibility in a relationship. The girls will say that they don't want to accept the boys' disrespect, but most often they do accept it—giggling—and do not think the situation is remediable. That is the status quo. For their part, most of the boys do not know how to relate to women as anything but caretakers and/or sexual-romantic objects. They buy into machismo wholeheartedly and do not consider themselves limited by it. They are romantic and do not understand the contradictions of their fantasies. Both boys and girls need the chance to examine the various personal, social, and cultural ramifications of being men and women.

The Color Purple, the major work for this unit, offers the opportunity to focus on power and abuse of power in male/female relationships. In addition, *The Color Purple* ought to raise some interesting questions about homosexuality, expose feelings of homophobia, and provide a chance to look at this issue calmly and responsibly, without fear.

Why Teach This Unit Now?

This is a good unit of study for the start of a new semester. The combination of themes in the unit will allow us to move between the abstract and the concrete. This is essential at the start of a new class, given the reality of new students with unknown abilities. Because this is a long book, we will limit our supplementary reading materials and make reading assignments short enough to accommodate any slower readers in the class. Several of the better readers may finish *The Color Purple* ahead of schedule. Slower readers can take time to

read in class, while those students who are done can get started on the nuts and bolts of essay writing. The last week or so of class will be spent writing the essay and will be tutorial.

The personal nature of the issues in this unit suggests that a longer essay, rather than a test, would be appropriate. Students will write essays on topics of their choice around the issues of sex roles, power, and identity. They will learn how to generate theses and to substantiate a thesis with evidence from both text and personal experience. In this way students will come to recognize that their own experience and understanding are as valid and valuable as Alice Walker's or as any author's. The reflective work necessary for this type of insight will bolster student confidence. Although they are at vastly different levels in terms of their writing, they all can master the required forms. These forms include making a claim, substantiating it with evidence, and explaining how the evidence proves their point.

KEY QUESTIONS

1. What are sex roles? What are male and female sex roles in our society?
2. What determines the different roles men and women play in society?
3. What gives a person power in a relationship?
4. How does gender affect identity?

TERMINAL OBJECTIVES

- To consider unit concepts carefully
- To reflect on these concepts as they impact students' lives
- To read a longer novel (even if students already have seen the movie)
- To write a longer, analytical, coherent essay, with prewriting

MATERIALS

General References (for instructors)

- Foucault, Michel (1980), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1971-1977*

Major Works (Novel)

- Walker, Alice (1982), *The Color Purple*

Chapters and Excerpts From Longer Works

- Fausto-Sterling, Anne (1985), "The Biological Connection: An Introduction" from *Myths of Gender: Biological Theories of Men and Women* (reprinted here with permission)
- Sabo, Don (1987), Excerpt from "Pigskin, Patriarchy, and Pain" from *New Men, New Minds: Breaking Male Tradition* (reprinted here with permission)

Articles

- Jarrett, Vernon (1985), "The Beast in 'Purple' "
- LeBlanc, Adrian Nicole (1991), "Girlfriends: Three Lives in the Drug Trade" (reprinted here with permission)

Short Stories

- Merimee, Prosper (1961), "The Pearl of Toledo"

Poems

- Dugan, Alan (1983), "Prayer" (reprinted here with permission)
- Piercy, Marge (1971, 1973, 1982), "A work of artifice" and "Barbie doll" (reprinted here with permission)
- Rilke, Rainer Maria (1981), "Sometimes a man stands up during supper . . ." (reprinted here with permission)

Songs

- Ice T (1988), "Power"
- Sweet Honey in the Rock (1980), "Oughta Be a Woman"
- Was/Not Was (1983), "Out Come the Freaks"

SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE

- Day 1: Lesson 1: Distribute HANDOUT 1: MALE/FEMALE ATTRIBUTES. Discuss gender stereotyping.
- Day 2: Lesson 2: Write Journal Assignment 1 in class.
- Day 3: Lesson 3: Watch TV in class.
Complete HANDOUT 2: GENDER ROLES ON TV. Discuss.
- Day 4: Lesson 4: Review Journal Assignment 1 entries; assign revision.
- Day 5: Lesson 5: Begin taking notes on two theories.
Read unit materials on sources of gender roles.
- Day 6: Continue taking notes and discussing theories.
- Day 7: Lesson 6: Read "Pearl of Toledo."
HANDOUT 3: "THE PEARL OF TOLEDO" QUESTIONS. Have students answer questions in class.
Homework: Read unit materials: "Girlfriends" article.
- Day 8: Finish reading article.
Generate discussion questions in small groups. Use HANDOUT 4: "GIRLFRIENDS: THREE LIVES IN THE DRUG TRADE" QUESTIONS.
- Day 9: Discuss story and article.
Assign Journal 2.
- Day 10: Lesson 7: Read poetry. Students work in small groups using HANDOUT 5: POETRY GROUP WORK TASKS.
Write new version of one of the four poems.
- Day 11: Continue writing poetry.
- Day 12: Lesson 8: Introduce Foucault's categories of power.
Small groups work on HANDOUT 6: POWER SCENARIOS.
- Day 13: Discuss handout, applying categories to characters in works already read.
- Day 14: Lesson 9: Begin reading *The Color Purple*.
Homework: HANDOUT 7: CASEWORKER ASSIGNMENT.
- Day 15: General discussion. Continue to read for homework.
- Day 16: Independent reading day.
- Day 17: Simple reading quiz.

- Day 18: Group activity: Students formulate quiz and discussion questions.
- Day 19: General discussion using groups' questions.
- Day 20: Assign Journal 3.
- Day 21: Short reading quiz.
- Day 22: Introduce essay writing skills.
Distribute HANDOUT 8: PROVING A POINT IN AN ESSAY; discuss.
- Day 23: Continue introducing claims, evidence, warrants.
Use HANDOUT L: CLAIMS, EVIDENCE, AND WARRANTS.
- Day 24: Independent reading day.
- Day 25: General discussion. Begin prewriting with HANDOUT 9:
CELIE'S IDENTITY.
- Day 26: Short reading quiz. Go over HANDOUT 9. Remind students
to save this!
- Day 27: Work with partners to start HANDOUT 10: CELIE AND MEN AND WOMEN.
Homework: Complete sheets.
- Day 28: Independent reading day.
- Day 29: General discussion. Review HANDOUT 10.
Remind students to save this and all prewriting handouts.
- Day 30: Class works together on part I of HANDOUT 11: GENDER STEREOTYPES
IN *THE COLOR PURPLE*; small groups work on part II.
Homework: Complete handout.
- Day 31: Assign HANDOUT 12: POWER IN *THE COLOR PURPLE*. Students work
on this in class.
- Day 32: Solicit students' questions. General discussion on final scenes
in novel, novel in entirety.
- Day 33: Catch-up day: Independent reading/work on written assignments.
- Day 34: Go over all handouts and essay prewriting work.
- Day 35: Lesson 10: Introduce basic format of the essay. Distribute HANDOUT
13: BOXES PLANNING SHEET FOR ESSAY WITH SAMPLE NOTES.
Work out essay-writing schedule; assign due dates.

- Day 36: Concentrate on generating provocative theses. Start selecting and modifying supporting claims, evidence, and warrants from the four prewriting handouts.
- Day 37: Continue formulating argument and planning structure of essay.
- Day 38: Write essay.
- Day 39: Write essay.
- Day 40: Write essay.
- Day 41: Hand in completed essay and prewriting.

LESSON 1: WHAT IS GENDER STEREOTYPING?

Objectives

- To open issues and terms pertaining to key questions
- To examine personal conceptions of gender roles and gender stereotyping

Materials

- HANDOUT 1: MALE/FEMALE ATTRIBUTES

Procedures

- Begin with general discussion of the terms *gender* and *sex roles*. Do not assume that the class recognizes the difference between a person's sex role and having sex. Discuss the different roles women and men need to fill in society, in their families, in the classroom, on TV.
- Distribute HANDOUT 1: MALE/FEMALE ATTRIBUTES. Ask students to fill these out on their own according to their first reactions. Explain any unfamiliar terms. It may be interesting (but could be merely gratuitous) to read the list aloud and ask for students' individual responses. Discuss the three questions at the end together as a class.
- Stress the concept of *gender stereotyping*. Ask students to relate a time they were expected to act in a certain way because of their gender.
- Read the following sample gender stereotype journal entry if desired, written by Baba, age 17:

One summer afternoon at about 2:00 some of my friends got together to play baseball at the park. I didn't really know how to play but I wanted to play anyway. My friend Tony said I could if I went and got some more people. So I went and got my two oldest sisters and my best friend who lived on the next block from me. We talked for awhile and went up to the park to play baseball. When my friends saw us they said we couldn't play cause baseball is not for girls it's a man's game. All the other boys laughed and said yeah, go play jump rope or something. I said why did you tell me to go get some more people if you knew you wasn't going to let us play. James (another boy) said go play rope. That's a girls' game. So me and my sisters and my friend left and came back with a lot of rocks. We threw the rocks at the boys and took all their bases and messed up their game. My sister said, "If we can't play, you can't, either."

HANDOUT 1: MALE/FEMALE ATTRIBUTES

Do not write your name.

What is your gender? _____

Directions:

1. Read through this list of words quickly, rating them "F" for "female" or "M" for "male." Mark your first reaction.

adventurous	giggling	sensitive
aggressive	gossip	sexy
artistic	good cook	strong
assertive	graceful	sweet
big	hairy	tall
boss	hard	talkative
bold	hard-working	takes risks
brave	heavy	teaches
cute	helpless	tender
communicative	hero	tough
dutiful	independent	unmechanical
domineering	innocent	ugly
dumb	loud	vicious
emotional	loving	wholesome
funny	nagging	wicked
gentle	quiet	responsible

2. Answer the following questions:

- a. What features characterize those qualities you have labeled "male"?
In other words, sum up a male, according to this sheet.

- b. What features characterize those qualities you have labeled "female"?
In other words, sum up a female, according to this sheet.

- c. In your opinion, what does this activity demonstrate?

LESSON 2: PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH GENDER STEREOTYPING

Objectives

- To review concept of gender stereotyping
- To tie the abstract concept to students' own experiences

Materials

- None

Procedures

- (Re)read sample aloud.
- Assign in-class writing: Journal Assignment 1: Write about a time you witnessed or experienced gender stereotyping. Tell the class that this is an inventory assignment to enable the teacher to get an idea of where students stand as writers. Explain to the students that they will not be graded on this assignment and that the important thing is to tell the story as completely as possible.
- If class looks lost, a good technique is to relate a personal experience or observation of your own showing gender stereotyping. It is best to keep these truthful but not too personal. I have had success recounting memories of receiving many unwanted, dress-up girly dolls for presents, and of teachers' expectations that girls would be better behaved in school than boys.

LESSON 3: GENDER STEREOTYPES IN THE MEDIA

Objectives

- To observe men's and women's roles as presented in popular media
- To reflect on the messages promulgated by these images

Materials

- HANDOUT 2: GENDER ROLES ON TV

Procedures

This exercise can be assigned as homework, or you can bring a TV into the classroom and complete the worksheet together as a class.

- Distribute HANDOUT 2: GENDER ROLES ON TV. Explain how it is to be filled out, what types of attributes to note, and so forth.
- If this is to be done for homework, explain that anything students see on TV or in the movies (including commercials and music videos) is appropriate to observe and analyze.
- After viewing various images on TV (it is not necessary to watch whole shows to do this exercise) or after students return to class after doing their homework, it is important to discuss the reflective question at the bottom of the worksheet ("What did you learn from this activity?"). Have students write responses to this question. Ask for volunteers to read their responses out loud.

HANDOUT 2: GENDER ROLES ON TV

Every time you watch TV you are getting messages about the ways men and women relate to the world and to each other. Fill out the following sheet based on what you see on TV.

SHOW AND CHARACTER	GENDER	OCCUPATION	MAIN PERSONALITY TRAITS	IS SHE OR HE POWERFUL? WHERE? HOW?

What did you learn from this activity?

LESSON 4: REVIEW OF JOURNAL ENTRIES

Objectives

- To share personal experiences and observations
- To recognize possible conflicts between self-concept and socially prescribed gender roles
- To note and correct errors in mechanics and style (for classes focusing on writing skills)

Materials

- Students' Journal Assignment 1 entries. Instructors should read and write supportive and constructive comments on these before returning them.

Procedures

- Return journals. After taking private note of outstanding entries, ask selected students if their entry may be shared with the class. Give many options for this reading: Piece can be read by teacher, anonymously by teacher, by a friend, or by the writer him- or herself. Discuss assets of entries read aloud (humor, honest language, good use of detail and dialogue, an example of particularly unjust gender stereotyping, etc.).
- If desired, class can focus on writing by passing out sample (or copy a student's piece with permission); class either can correct mechanics (spelling, dialogue punctuation, and other punctuation) or can revise writing (insert dialogue, add description, etc.). Of course, they can do this with their own journals after or instead of working on a sample piece.

LESSON 5: SOURCES OF GENDER STEREOTYPES

Objective

- To name, explain, and examine two theories of gender roles and stereotypes

Materials

- UNIT MATERIALS: Sources of Gender Roles, including excerpts from Fausto-Sterling's "The Biological Connection: An Introduction" and Sabo's "Pigskin, Patriarchy, and Pain"

Procedures

- Pose the following questions to the class, moving to the issue of the origins of gender roles. (This issue already has come up, no doubt.) Discuss:

1. What is the problem with gender stereotyping?
2. Aren't there some general truths about guys and girls that we just can't ignore?
3. If you are a girl who wants to play baseball or a boy who loves to cook, aren't you just an exception to the general rule?
4. Where did gender roles come from?
5. Does gender stereotyping have any legitimate basis?

- Write these terms on the board and ask the class to take notes:

1. *Biological determinism*: the theory that biology is destiny. We act as we do because nature gave us the appropriate anatomies to do so. (Example: Women are responsible for taking care of babies because they can provide nourishment [breast-feeding].)
2. *Sociocultural pressure*: the theory that upbringing is everything. We are compelled to act as we do because of the myriad role models, social pressures, and messages conveyed to us throughout our lives. (Example: Women are responsible for taking care of babies because they are expected to—little girls are given baby dolls, not toy soldiers.)

- Ask the class to provide and note other examples that support either side of the "nature versus nurture" controversy. Discuss:

1. What choices in life are ruled by our bodies?
2. What cultural institutions have we created that determine our lives as men and women?

- Distribute UNIT MATERIALS: Sources of Gender Roles. These are readings that explain how biological determinism ("The Biological Connection: An Introduction") and sociocultural pressure ("Pigskin, Patriarchy, and Pain") account for gender roles. Because this is pure theory, you should take students through the material slowly—reading aloud, stopping to ask and answer questions, and writing notes on the board to be copied by students.

UNIT MATERIALS: SOURCES OF GENDER ROLES

The Biological Connection: An Introduction

by Anne Fausto-Sterling

These are difficult times. The middle-class family of the 1950's, headed by a husband, managed by a wife, and enlivened by two children and a collie, is no more. In its stead we have single-parent families, contract marriages, palimony suits, and serial monogamy. Women demand equal pay for work of equal value, take assertiveness training, and feminists organize to change long-standing political and social structures. Men are unsure about whether to expect a thank you or a snarl when they hold a door open for a woman, and clothing designers offer us the world of unisex dress. Hair length doesn't matter, the gender gap in finishing marathon races gets smaller every year, and "affirmative action" has become embedded in our language. The variety and rapidity of the changes symbolized by these random examples have generated an expressly political backlash by the "New Right," doubts about individual identity, and fears of sexual obliteration-through-equality. In response to such personal and social upheaval, professionals throughout the country—scientists, journalists, economists, and politicians—have begun to search out the real truths about sexual differences. And therein lies a tale.

Over the years physicians, biologists, and anthropologists have had a lot to say about women's place in the world. In the nineteenth century, some scientists wrote that women who work to obtain economic independence set themselves up for "a struggle against nature,"¹ while author after author used Darwin's theory of evolution to argue that giving the vote to women was, evolutionarily speaking, retrogressive.² Physicians and educators alike warned that young women who engage in long, hard hours of study will badly damage their reproductive systems, perhaps going insane to boot. With these warnings came grim predictions about the end of the [white, middle-class] human race.³ Ironically, feminists of the period often used the same biological arguments to support their own points of view.⁴ Antoinette Brown Blackwell, for example, garnered evidence from the natural world to prove the fundamental equality of men

and women,⁵ and Eliza Gamble argued outright for the natural superiority of the female sex.⁶

Today, too, many scientists respond to the issues of sexual equality and the social and political upheaval that has accompanied it by offering us their insights, suggesting in all sincerity that, however well intentioned, the women's liberation movement and its fellow travelers want biologically unnatural changes that would bring grief to the human race. Sociobiologists, for example, suggest that our evolutionary history deeply affects our most intimate personal relationships. Man's natural sexuality sends him in search of many sex partners, making him an unstable mate at best, while women's biological origins destine her to keep the home fires burning, impelling her to employ trickery and deceit to keep hubby from straying. The battle between the sexes is ancient; its origin lies hidden deep in our genes.⁷ One sociobiologist even argues that male and female sexuality are so different, so at odds, that it makes sense to think of the two sexes as separate species.⁸ In general these scientists emphasize difference, the biological logic of male-female conflict, and the dim prospects for change.

Even physical violence fits into the picture. Dr. Katharina Dalton, a British physician who has made a name for herself by publicizing and then inventing treatments for something she calls the Premenstrual Syndrome, suggests that monthly hormone fluctuations may cause afflicted women to unknowingly injure themselves, claiming afterward that their husbands had beaten them: "All too often the patient herself is not fully aware of the distress caused by her periodic tantrums . . . When a woman demonstrates bruises as signs of her husband's cruelty it is well to remember the possibility that these may be spontaneous bruises of the premenstruum."⁹

Biologically based argumentation has even invaded the criminal court system. In the trial of a woman who had used an automobile to run over and kill her boyfriend, Dalton testified that the woman had suffered from premenstrual derangement and should not be held legally re-

sponsible for her acts. As a result the woman received a conditional discharge from jail.¹⁰ A similar defense is now valid in French courts,¹¹ while in the United States a judge recently acquitted a dentist accused of rape and sodomy, after the defendant claimed that his girlfriend had filed the charges during a period of premenstrual irrationality.¹² Whether the idea that we are mere agents of our own bodies will make inroads into the criminal justice system remains to be seen. If this idea does take hold, the erosion of personal responsibility for one's actions—be it a woman who commits murder or a man who batters or rapes—would be an inevitable consequence.

Lost also would be our society's ability to recognize large-scale violence as a social problem to be dealt with in a public arena. One recent

study, for instance, suggests that a woman in a large city stands a 26 percent chance of being raped during her lifetime. This statistic increases to 50 percent when the possibility of rape attempts is taken into account.¹³ Are we to believe that these statistics result from the male's ungovernable mating urge combined with the false reporting of distraught premenstrual women? Or must we face up to the conclusion that sexual violence is somehow embedded in the social fabric? If we believe the former, then there's not much to be done about it; if we believe the latter, we must collectively endeavor to change the assumptions and attitude of our culture—a complex and difficult task. Clearly, what we think about the biological basis of criminal violence matters a great deal.

NOTES

1. W. Bagehot, "Biology and 'Women's' Rights," *Popular Science Monthly* 14 (1879): 201-13.
2. M. K. Sedgewick, "Some Scientific Aspects of the Woman Suffrage Question," *Gunton's Magazine* 20 (1901): 333-44; G. Ferrero, "The Problem of Woman, From a Bio-Sociological Point of View," *The Monist* 4 (1894): 261-74; E. D. Cope, "The Relationship of the Sexes to Government," *Popular Science Monthly* 33 (1888): 261-74; J. Weir, Jr., "The Effect of Female Suffrage on Posterity," *American Naturalist* 29 (1895): 815-25.
3. H. Maudsley, "Sex in Mind and in Education," *Popular Science Monthly* 5 (1894): 198-215; A. L. Smith, "Higher Education of Women and Race Suicide," *Popular Science Monthly* 66 (1906): 466-73; G. DeLawney, "Equality and Inequality in Sex," *Popular Science Monthly* 20 (1881): 184-92; M. A. Hardaker, "Science and the Woman Question," *Popular Science Monthly* 20 (1882): 577-84; N. Morais, "A Reply to Miss Hardaker on: The Woman Question," *Popular Science Monthly* 21 (1882): 70-78; Stephen J. Gould, "The Mismeasure of Man" (New York: Norton, 1981); W. L. Distant, "On the Mental Differences Between the Sexes," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* 4 (1875): 78-85.
4. Janet Sayers, *Biological Politics: Feminist and Anti-feminist Perspectives* (London: Tavistock, 1982).
5. Antoinette B. Blackwell, *The Sexes Throughout Nature* (New York: Putnam, 1875; Westport, Conn.: Hyperion, 1976).
6. E. B. Gamble, *Evolution of Woman: An Inquiry into the Dogma of Her Inferiority to Man* (New York: Putnam, 1893; Westport, Conn.: Hyperion, 1976).
7. D. Barash, *The Whisperings Within* (New York: Penguin, 1979); D. Symons, *The Evolution of Human Sexuality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); and J. Durden-Smith and D. DeSimone, "The Main Event," *Playboy*, June 1982, 165.
8. Symons, *Evolution of Human Sexuality*.
9. Katharina Dalton, *The Premenstrual Syndrome* (London: William Heinemann Medical Books, 1964), 94.
10. M. B. Rosenthal, "Insights into the Premenstrual Syndrome," *Physician and Patient* (April 1983): 46-53.
11. T. O. Marsh, *Roots of Crime* (Newton, N.J.: Nellen, 1981).
12. W. Herbert, "Premenstrual Changes," *Science News* 122 (1982): 380-81.
13. D.E.H. Russell and N. Howell, "The Prevalence of Rape in the United States Revisited," *Signs* 8 (1983): 688-95.

SOURCE: "The Biological Connection: An Introduction" in *Myths of Gender: Biological Theories of Men and Women* (pp. 3-5) by Anne Fausto-Sterling, 1985, New York: HarperCollins Publishers. Copyright © 1985. Used with permission.

Pigskin, Patriarchy, and Pain

by Don Sabo

Sport is just one of the many areas in our culture where pain is more important than pleasure. Boys are taught that to endure pain is courageous, to survive pain is manly. The principle that pain is "good" and pleasure is "bad" is crudely evident in the "no pain, no gain" philosophy of so many coaches and athletes. "The pain principle" weaves its way into the lives and psyches of male athletes in two fundamental ways. It stifles men's awareness of their bodies and limits our emotional expression. We learn to ignore personal hurts and injuries because they interfere with the "efficiency" and "goals" of the "team." We become adept at taking the feelings that boil up inside us—feelings of insecurity and stress from striving so hard for success—and channeling them in a bundle of rage which is directed at opponents and enemies. This posture toward oneself and the world is not limited to "jocks." It is evident in the lives of many nonathletic men who, as tough guys, deny their authentic physical or emotional needs and develop health problems as a result.

Today, I no longer perceive myself as an *individual* ripped off by athletic injury. Rather, I see myself as just *one more man among many men* who got swallowed up by a social system predicated on male domination. Patriarchy has two structural aspects. First, it is a hierarchical system in which men dominate women in crude and debased, slick and subtle ways. Feminists have made great progress exposing and analyzing this dimension of the edifice of sexism. But it is also a system of *intermale dominance*, in which a minority of men dominates the masses of men. This intermale dominance hierarchy exploits the majority of those it beckons to join its heights. Patriarchy's mythos of heroism and its morality of power-worship implant visions of ecstasy and masculine excellence in the minds of the boys who ultimately will defend its inequities and ridicule its victims. It is inside this institutional framework that I have begun to explore the essence and scope of "the pain principle."

SOURCE: Excerpt from "Pigskin, Patriarchy, and Pain" by Don Sabo, in Franklin Abbott (Ed.), *New Men, New Minds: Breaking Male Tradition*, 1987, Freedom, CA: Crossing Press. This piece also can be found in *Sex, Violence, and Power in Sports: Rethinking Masculinity* by Michael Messner and Don Sabo, 1994, Freedom, CA: Crossing Press. Used with permission of the author.

LESSON 6: POWER IN RELATIONSHIPS

Objectives

- To examine and reflect on the ways in which power is used and abused in some relationships between men and women
- To demonstrate ability to make inferences from readings
- To discuss individual perspective and affective response to readings

Materials

Short works showing men and women in traditional and nontraditional gender roles. I have used:

- Merimee's short story "Pearl of Toledo"
- HANDOUT 3: "PEARL OF TOLEDO" QUESTIONS
- UNIT MATERIALS: "Girlfriends: Three Lives in the Drug Trade"
- HANDOUT 4: "GIRLFRIENDS: THREE LIVES IN THE DRUG TRADE" QUESTIONS

Procedures

- Distribute Merimee's "Pearl of Toledo." Do not engage students in a discussion of this work so that you may use HANDOUT 3: "PEARL OF TOLEDO" QUESTIONS to take inventory of students' abilities to make inferences, read for implied relationships between characters, and so on. These questions begin with simple queries about basic stated information and advance through questions that require progressively more sophisticated powers of inference and interpretation. Explain any unknown words (e.g., *swarthy*) out loud to entire class as they are reading. See INSTRUCTORS' NOTES E: SKILL INVENTORIES (Chapter 4) for an explanation of the reading inventory.
- After students have finished writing (or after you have read their responses, if you prefer), discuss questions. Make sure class considers the last three questions critically.
- Discuss with students whether strict sex roles and conventional expectations still play a part in relationships today or if everything has changed. Distribute UNIT MATERIALS: "Girlfriends: Three Lives in the Drug Trade" to read in class or for homework. Instructors should note and take appropriate measures to deal with the graphic language used in this article.
- Divide students who complete the reading early into small groups to create their own discussion questions. Examples of student-generated ques-

tions are given with a list of provided questions. When entire class has finished reading, distribute HANDOUT 4: "GIRLFRIENDS: THREE LIVES IN THE DRUG TRADE" QUESTIONS or use a combination of provided questions and student-generated questions.

- Ask class to respond to "Pearl of Toledo" and "Girlfriends: Three Lives in the Drug Trade" by relating a story in which someone stayed in a relationship that was oppressive. Ask them if they can understand any of the factors that allowed the relationship to continue.

- Write Journal Assignment 2 on the board: How can a person participate in his or her own oppression in a relationship? (Because of the nature of this assignment, make it clear to students that they do not have to hand in their journal to be read by the instructor.)

After giving the class time to write, I obtained permission to read the following student-written sample aloud:

One reason could be they're scared. For example, I know a girl who met a guy and they fell deeply in love. When he met some new friends that sell drugs, all he see is fast money.

After a while he start cheating on her. And she knows it. Then, he start to beat on her and when he finish he apologize and says he hit her because he loves her.

A lot of girls have heard this line and if they believe it they are fooling themselves. This girl believed her man like a stupid ass. He kept beating her. After a while she got fed up with it. She wanted to leave him but she was scared if she did he would find her and beat her even worse.

My written comment to this student offered support for her and listed a few phone numbers (a crisis hot line, women's shelters) for her friend. In class, we had a moving discussion about passivity, fear, responsibility, and so forth. We did not treat this discussion as an academic one, or try to analyze anything. Classes dealing with such real-life issues must be prepared to diverge from preplanned daily objectives to focus on the personal dilemmas and conditions that present themselves.

HANDOUT 3: "THE PEARL OF TOLEDO" QUESTIONS

1. Who is the Pearl of Toledo and what is special about her?
2. Who is Don Guttiera de Saldana?
3. Why does swarthy (dark) Suzani want to fight Don Guttiera de Saldana?
4. Who is killed at the fountain of Almami?
5. Why does the Pearl of Toledo approach the wounded man?
6. What significance does his "last effort" have for him? For the Pearl of Toledo?
7. How does this story address the issue of racism? Sexism?
8. What is the greatest abuse of power in this story?

UNIT MATERIALS

Girlfriends: Three Lives in the Drug Trade

by Adrian Nicole LeBlanc

At *Grande Billiards* on 184th Street and the Grand Concourse in the Bronx, Lucy hooks her beeper into the V of her cleavage. Her friend Isabella smiles, a little embarrassed, and tucks her own on the waistband of the leggings she wears under her thigh-high black leather boots. Isabella and Lucy met because their boyfriends dealt heroin together, and the girls have license to come out on this cold Saturday night only because their boyfriends are in jail.

Tonight's excursion is a rare show of female defiance. More familiar are their project apartments and their routines of babies and soap operas. The girls are more comfortable visiting their incarcerated boyfriends dutifully, riding the No. 6 train for 45 minutes to the MCC, the Metropolitan Correctional Center at the intersection of Park Row and Pearl Street in lower Manhattan, or the two-hour bus ride to Otisville; tending to the boys' requests for cassettes and Playboy; gathering enough money for their commissary purchases; writing letters; staying home to receive the boys' collect calls; reassuring them with coos of faithfulness and love. Although they will be interrogated when the boys call in from jail tomorrow morning—what did they wear, who was at the pool hall, what time did they leave their homes and arrive, how did they get there, who spoke with them, how and what time did they get home—the girls have decided to go out.

Everyone in the pool hall has a beeper—strung on a belt, hanging in a pocket, tucked in a jacket. Isabella proudly says that many of the people here are involved in drug dealing. She is a stunning Puerto Rican girl with long, shining, straight black hair, bangs sprouting from a barrette at the top of her head, all bold and charm. The heavy gold necklaces she wears tonight, some with medallions, belong to someone she calls "just a friend." The chains are significant status symbols; it is rare that a girl would buy them on her own. Her wearing them suggests that Isabella is an important girl. That is, a girl an important boy wants.

Like all people who operate from the assumption that they exist for other people, the

girls are unsure of their own experiences of fun. At their table, between checks out the window to see who in what Maxima or Mercedes is pulling up, Lucy, 23, and her 14-year-old cousin Marisa attempt to organize their game. They laugh self-consciously (they don't know how to play pool) and young men saunter to their rescue. The flirtations begin—here is how one breaks, leans over, holds the cue.

At 11:30 more guys stream in. After they pass the first check at the downstairs entrance, where they are frisked, the group's movements are radioed up to the second entrance at the top of the stairs. Girls to whom the boys pass their guns can flirt their way by the entry booth, hiding the boys' guns beneath their shirts. "Three bad bitches coming" the doorman calls up, and the girls know they are in. They pass the bouncers, the guys follow suit, then the girls pass the guns back to the boys. In return, the boys will pay for their hours of pool.

More and more guys—all under 20—arrive, in leather hats with maps of Africa, hats with thin diamond bands. The coats the boys step out of are nothing less than leather—thick sheepskin, black Northbeach with dark brown fur, all-yellow bombers with white fox-trimmed hoods. They walk around in red leather sweatsuits, wearing weight in chains—diamond chokers, wide gold link-ropes with pendants, sapphires, onyx, rubies, jade. There are many Rolexes, 18-karat bracelets, diamond-studded namebar rings. The gold medallions they wear—the size of large cookies—are of Spanish patron saints.

A Cuban boy steps over to help Lucy break. She tends to her teacher courteously, but seems distracted, as if being out with the girls ought to be more fun. Isabella, 20, spreads out the skirt of her chiffon baby-doll dress and begins to weave through the pool hall's 42 tables. It is the girlish stroll of the movies—pivoting, eyes down, the lag of the toes—by group after group of boys. Lucy's and Isabella's boyfriends were some of the most popular boys, feared and rich. Isabella's boyfriend David managed a location and supposedly murdered a person. "He could have be-

come anything he wanted to," says Isabella. "He looked Italian." He is Puerto Rican, very handsome. Isabella was his.

So when David's friends come into the hall and Isabella spots them with the speed of instinct, she is tearing off her borrowed gold necklaces and shoving them into Lucy's hands, over Lucy's cousin Marisa's neck, begging, low-voiced, to her girlfriends to, please, take them and put them on. Isabella then rushes to David's friends. Her attentiveness is expected and it does her nerves some good. She escorts them back to the table—eyes finding home on the ground—and as they approach, Lucy's pool teacher says, "I am getting out of here. Now."

David's friends are drug dealers, significant ones, and in the pool hall, as on the street, they accord respect, the silent caterings of fear. If David's friends saw Isabella in jewelry, they would think she was playing David dirty. At the very least, his friends would report her indiscretion to him. At the worst, they would destroy the jewelry's owner.

One of David's friends gives Isabella money to buy him cherry brandy, and she puts on her leather coat and hurries down to the street. She scurries past two men under a car they are dismantling, and grabs each pay phone on every other freezing, locked-up block. "Shit!" she says, as she slams a receiver down, onto the next, then, "Shit!" another. Isabella needs to beep her new friend and warn him not to show up—David's friends would never understand. When she finds a dial tone, she punches in 9-5-8, a code that will recite the pay phone's number back. If it doesn't, Isabella says, the phone is tapped. She moves past the chicken palaces and video stores, past the cashiers behind their thick plastic shells. After 10 blocks she finds a phone where the 958 code registers, so she tests the number from another nearby phone, but the incoming call won't ring in. She's running the blocks and each phone faster now—she stops, she checks, it doesn't work. As she hustles, the fear ebbs into excitement. She darts into a bar.

Inside, two chubby Spanish girls sit in dark blue satin, like bridesmaids under the red tinsel strung above their heads. Isabella plugs her free ear, punches in her friend's beeper code, and sighs, hanging up the phone. "You can play guys dirty as long as you don't do it in front of their friends," she says, as she waits for him to call back. "That's disrespect."

When you are beeped, the number of the person calling flashes on your beeper's mini-screen. If you are the girl you're supposed to be, you return the call in seconds, exactly the amount of time your boyfriend would have the patience to stand by the phone waiting, wherever he is. (More than one girlfriend had three or four beepers lined up by her phone.) Some codes mean simply, "I'm on my way home" (there is no code for "I'm staying out") or, whatever-we-discussed-is-taken-care-of, which could be anything from a covert meaning to "Yes, I got the baby's diapers." You can beep your boyfriend whenever you like, but whether or not he'll call back will depend. If it's urgent you add 911; his friends use 411 when they have information. There may be private digits for other kinds of specification: if Lucy used 888 after her usual code to her boyfriend Jack, only he would know what it meant. Close associates sometimes punch in the street corners where they may be found, or the street number and a building number.

Everybody has a code so that each caller can be identified immediately. Lucy is 89, and Isabella is 128 and their friend Dolores, who went out with another of Jack's dealers, is 165 because of the cross streets where they live. Some people use their building or apartment numbers, and others are known by their age or the digits from their prison IDs. David was always 117, the number of a street where he managed a spot. Often dealers prefer girls to use only codes instead of entire phone numbers (it is rare they would beep from anywhere but home), just in case other girlfriends are near the beeper when the numbers flash. A few years ago, having a beeper was an indication of being on the inside, but now almost anyone can have one, so they've lost the bulk of their status. Still, for these girls, the beeper is an object rife with conflicted assumptions about ownership and honor, a little flash into what being a drug dealer's girlfriend can mean.

How close the girlfriends actually are to the drugs depends upon the parameters of their relationships with the men who sell them, which in turn depends upon circumstance and convenience as much as the variables of personality and a dealer's work ethics. Some girlfriends are encouraged to act as dispatchers of a sort. They steer business phone calls and deliver instructions from their apartments, where their children play at their feet. Others run deliveries or supervise mill tables. Some—and this seems the most

common girlfriend duty—are entrusted to count money. Some girlfriends want no part of it, some draw the line at hiding guns. Some girls regularly work the tables (bagging and stamping may be how they became girlfriends), while others will only fill in when large shipments demand their labor.

Of course there are girlfriends, like there are always girlfriends, who do whatever their boyfriends want done, from washing underwear in the kitchen sink, to awakening early in the morning for unwanted anal sex, to making reservations for dates with other girls, to acting as a decoy to lure in associates and enemies targeted to be killed. And plenty of girlfriends cheat.

A boyfriend's positioning of his girlfriend can depend on his reading of love, but as often as not it depends on his need for a person he can trust. This need varies in relation to his negotiations on the street, but a girlfriend is likely to be the one constant in his life. All the girlfriends, from those who knew their boyfriends before they became drug dealers, to those who gladly affect the false stupidity of mafioso mothers and wives, are afforded the vicarious power that comes with their connection to "successful" men. Beyond this, the lives of these girlfriends are as complex and varied as the lives of just regular compromised girls.

The women that drug dealers come home to are actually girlfriends, but they are known, at least in a fair portion of the South Bronx, as wives. The title is as unoriginal and oppressive as its ancient meaning, and has nothing to do with adolescent absorption of modern urban culture or the values specific to the selling of drugs. It is, finally, about being a girl perceived as useful to a guy, for the kinds of reasons that guys find girls they like useful. "When you meet a guy, in the Bronx, and you go out with them for about a month, you are permanently his wife," Dolores explains. She is a tiny girl, with a raspy, vacant voice. "Even if you say, 'Excuse me, I have no ring on my finger, no paper in my wallet,' they go, 'You still his wife.' It's like everybody give you the respect. Sometimes you feel good about it like, 'Oh, I'm his wife.' "

"We stay home and we cook and we clean," says Isabella. "We the wives." The girls do benefit: they get deference and protection on the streets; their rent and food are paid for; they have money for their kids' clothes and toys. Your husband's friends will talk to you, but they usually won't try to pick you up. The downside is your husband's constant absence, his growing ego,

and the times of trouble. A year after he began dealing, Joey had a bad encounter and the dissatisfied client threatened to kill Dolores and her son, Jose. Joey ushered Dolores into the midtown Marriott for a few weeks and he didn't let her outside. He told her their apartment building was leaking gas and kept the truth to himself until the danger passed.

The other girls, the ones most heard about—the ones that get taken to Atlantic City, or discovered on the guys-only vacations in Puerto Rico, or flown into New York from Belize or Hawaii to go to clubs—they are only mistresses, or just girls. Girls who the dealers would pick up and—just as a joke—leave in a restaurant on the highway. Girls who might give them head for drugs, or for nothing more than being "shown a good time out." Girls unknowingly videotaped during sex for the amusement of the neighborhood (in one Harlem video game a guy earns points for the speed in which he can steer a girl through his hidden schedule of sexual service). Like most peripheral sexual players to the institution of marriage, the nonwife girls have better odds of acquiring the most romanticized material expressions of male-female association—hotel rooms, plane tickets to exotic places, perfume, jewelry, candy, lingerie. The only jewelry Isabella ever got from David was a bracelet; he passed it along to her when he bought an identical one with thicker links. To the wives who know about their husbands' wanderings at all, these girls are just the other girls, the drinking partners, the slimy wannabes, girls their husbands fucked. Little skeezers, sluts, money-hungry leeches, bitches. Dogs.

Lucy met Jack on a blind date. Before he was arrested with his crew in 1989, when he was 20, he led a South Bronx heroin operation that employed 30 people and made him a millionaire by the age of 18. Except for the countable bursts of celebration—a trip to Puerto Rico when she was his mistress, a few coats, birthday shopping sprees, and a nice, nice ring—in their two years together, Lucy saw little of Jack's money. She often had to beep him to buy her lunch or to pick up diapers for her little girls. But she was always around the money and the activity that was around Jack. Members of Jack's organization claim that Lucy was a mill worker at his table, but Lucy denies this. She claims she knew nothing about any involvement Jack is supposed to have had with heroin at all.

The phone taps that were part of Jack's federal trial present Lucy as a girl who spent most of her long days talking, discussing soap operas with friends, taking messages for Jack, seeking out advice about caring for her little girls when they were sick or acting up. Much of her days Lucy spent worrying and wondering about Jack's other girlfriends, whom she regularly attempted to locate by phone. Most of the time, Lucy sounds tremendously lonely and bored.

Jack had plenty of other girls and children of his own—another "wife" with the first-born son whom he adores, girls he'd pick up and girls he'd take out for three or four months at a time—but Lucy hung in there because she was at least second. "You know how they say drug addicts can't live without their drug?" she says. "Jack's like my drug."

Lucy's father died of hepatitis when she was three, and her mother was always afraid of the streets. Growing up, Lucy left the apartment only when her mother went to buy food or would take her and her little brother to the park. When she was 16, Lucy became pregnant and had a little girl. She found out about her second pregnancy—twins—as she was getting her stomach pumped after a suicide attempt when she was 17. "I never got the attention I deserved when I was little," Lucy says. "I would do anything for attention."

Jack's attention included beatings, at least one of which required the services of a doctor. That night, Lucy ventured out to a club to dance, and Jack unexpectedly returned from a vacation—he never liked to discuss the details of his plans. More infuriating to him than her actual absence was the fact that he didn't have keys to the apartment. So he hunted her down and escorted her to his waiting car. While one of his lieutenants drove, Jack beat Lucy in the back seat of the Lincoln Town Car until she passed out. He dumped her bloodied body at his mother's feet. "Whenever I woke up to his mother, I knew he beat me," Lucy says. She feels she deserved that beating, that she deserves his wrath in general, but she is hurt by the fact that Jack seemed distracted. "It wasn't like it was about me," she says, ashamed. "It didn't seem like it had nothing to do with me."

And Lucy is proud that she is finally Jack's main girl, even if it took jail to make him realize it. "Ask him yourself," she dares you. "He says he wouldn't have made it without me." They are now engaged. On her 23rd birthday they were supposed to marry in the visiting room of the MCC. Lucy is still waiting.

She'll show you the ring to prove his love and her half dozen tattoos in his honor—his name is inscribed on her back, on her thigh and ankle, and on her butt, along with hearts and roses and a love poem to him and, in one spot, the stamp "Property of Jack"—as well as the pictures of him on Hawaiian vacations with the other girls cut out of the frame. Since his conviction on drug charges, Lucy has returned to her mother's two-bedroom apartment in the South Bronx. She lives with her girls, her mother and stepfather, and sometimes her brother's baby daughter. She couldn't maintain the apartment she had downtown because Jack doesn't want her to work. Her phone bills alone, from all the collect calls from jail—Jack, their friends serving time out-of-state, her brother, upstate in a juvenile facility for attempted murder—had reached more than a thousand dollars before they turned her phone off. "My brother knows the guys that are in the Central Park rape," Lucy says, in her drained way of talking, all words breathing out like a sleepy joke.

When Lucy had a telephone, her answering machine message had the same sexy voice: "Hello. Yes. I accept a collect call . . ."

It seems the perfect response to the contours of her difficult life and the appropriate tone to match her full-lipped, voluptuous body. It might even seem possible that her troubles could all be under control were it not for the exhaustion that seeps through the words, and for her eyes. Lucy has the fearful eyes of every damaged kid.

Isabella's boyfriend David was not a major dealer. He worked for Jack managing a location at 117th Street and Brook Avenue. He oversaw the location's lookouts, street runners, and pitch men, and made at least \$1000 a week. Now, at 21, he is awaiting his sentence for conspiracy; he's also been charged with a murder, allegedly committed the first few weeks he was out on bail.

In retrospect, although she still loves him, Isabella is not sure why she liked David. Every night he used to come home drunk, leave in the morning, and come back drunk. She used to cry a lot and he hated her crying. "I'd be there sleeping," Isabella says, "he'd try to butter me up. I'd take his shoes off and have to make him comfortable, but when he'd wake up, he'd be in a bad mood. There would be a phone call and he'd be gone. I'd be like, 'David?'"

They lived with David's mother in the projects where they both grew up. Isabella stayed in David's bedroom watching TV and crying.

David's mother would encourage Isabella to stand up for her rights and Isabella knows that she should have been stronger, but she just wasn't. It was two years before she felt comfortable enough to go into the refrigerator and get food for herself.

David would always call when he got arrested, and Isabella would wait at the courthouse—usually, for 72 hours—until he came before the judge. In the two years they were together, this happened more than half a dozen times. Whenever he was incarcerated, she tried to open his spot for business, but only after David threatened his dealers would they listen to her instructions. The only other thing David ever let her do was to count some of the money, usually \$50,000. "He never let me do anything big," Isabella says. But he would always tell her all the details if something exciting happened.

When David eventually moved Isabella into a house of her own, she liked it—a real neighborhood with Italian people and trees—even though it was lonely. He would beep her when he was done working, and she would cook him dinner, but he never made it home to eat. At four or five in the morning, he would come in and tell her to heat it up. "He called me the Microwave Queen," Isabella says, still embarrassed.

Three months after they moved, David got arrested for the final time. Isabella had no money for rent and food and David had nothing saved, so she immediately moved back in with her parents. "I never had no shopping sprees," says Isabella. "That was all bull. He would spend it on his friends; he would pay for everybody. Sometimes we'd go out to eat, or we'd go to Playland, but we would always end up running because they got drunk and started fights." The one time he promised to take her on a trip, after she had her bags packed and ready, he called and told her to forget it. " 'It's gonna just be the guys,' he says. And they went to the Poconos, and I found out it wasn't just the guys. But that was okay, I didn't need none of those trips," she says.

Neither Lucy nor Isabella was—or is—bothered by the nature of their boyfriends' business; they approached it as the unquestioned commerce of their neighborhood streets. Although the American Dream metaphor for drug dealers—the entrepreneurs of denied opportunity—is a tired and sloppy one, there remains in it a strong seed of pure American truth: If Joey or David or Jack didn't do it, somebody else would, and not everybody can. At least, the girls felt,

their boyfriends commanded respect. Better yet, their boyfriends were employed.

David's friend Joey was also one of Jack's dealers, and his "wife" Dolores became Isabella's friend. Dolores' explanation of her life has an eerie quality of inevitability. She describes a father, an alcoholic and a gambler, who regularly beat up and threatened to kill her mother when she wouldn't hand over the family money. Still, Dolores says he took care of them all. When he was shot in an abandoned building—Dolores was six—life became frightening. "We couldn't get what we wanted," she says. "We was scared. My mother panicked." As her mother's depression grew, she became superstitious nearly to the point of paralysis, and Dolores grew up indoors. Her mother was afraid of the streets, and Dolores spent afternoons practicing cheers and the baton inside their apartment. She was never allowed out alone.

Still, at 15, Dolores got pregnant. Her boyfriend was an alcoholic, so she broke up with him when she was six months pregnant and got a job filing at a doctor's office. One day she bought everything her son would need—shoes, Baby Wipes, blankets, a stroller, playpen, toys, a crib—and wrapped the gifts and put music on. "I gave myself a baby shower," she says. "I started dancing, and I sat on the chairs, and opened all the gifts. And I put on all these clothes, I came out of the closet, and go doo, doo, doo, and I would pose. I would do stuff like that, all by myself. And I made it fun, you know. If I didn't do it, nobody was going to do it for me." She was eight months and two weeks pregnant by then. She walked herself to the hospital when she went into labor; her mother met her there.

She saw Joey in his Hawaiian shorts in the schoolyard, and he asked her if she was calling him Baby when she was actually calling to a friend. He was her sister's husband's best friend, and it only took a little while until he moved in. He worked in a gift shop on 125th then, he hadn't yet started dealing. "Little things he would take home," Dolores says, like a cupcake. "It was real, real nice."

Then Joey began coming home late, and there was lots of running around. He tries to deny it for three months, but Dolores knew. "I said, 'It's obvious Joey. All these people are looking for you. You got beepers.' "

Dolores didn't like Joey's dealing because it took him away from home. She had no moral dilemmas about the business and possessed no clear fear of the inherent dangers, but she

wouldn't give him her blessing. He didn't have to deal drugs; she never loved him for money. She resented his absence and the lying, even though it took her a year to tell him so.

Jack's operation fell, and almost everyone involved was arrested. "It was exciting at first," says Isabella. "We finally found out what they were doing all that time they was away from us."

"We love them but we hate them," Dolores says. "You know when you love somebody but you hate them?" Dolores and Isabella went to the courthouse each day of the months-long trial. They would dress up beautiful in their best outfits, bought for them by their parents—hair pulled back, makeup, miniskirts, leather coats—and lean over the deep mahogany benches to get as close to the guys as the court marshals would permit. But on the days the guys' friends showed up—which were rare—the guys seemed almost to forget that their wives even existed. The guys' friends always come first.

Lucy went to court whenever she could get a babysitter. Sometimes she bought Kaitlin, her oldest girl, and Kaitlin would sit quietly on those same deep mahogany benches drawing pictures of her mother.

According to the boys' lawyers, Jack will likely receive at least 30 years, Joey was recently sentenced to 20 years, and David will receive at least 20. Parole is unlikely.

Joey has been in MCC for more than six months. Jose has been told the MCC is a hospital, and that Daddy is very sick, so that Jose believes that hospitals are bad because they never let their patients go home. Dolores doesn't like the untruth, but Jose is too young to understand.

With their boyfriends in jail, the girls have begun, for the first time in their young lives, to think of themselves as people with goals beyond the tasks of daily survival for themselves and their relationships and their kids. There are the lawyers' offices, the courtrooms, the jails to visit. The girls have been forced to consider the uncertain terms of futures they've never before questioned, not because they were so satisfied with their lives, but because the concept of futures never came to play in their experiences at all. Isabella is the only one who is concerned about launching herself beyond her predicament rather than re-establishing the same form of half-security again.

Significantly, she is also the only one to come from an intact home and the only one whose father worked (he was a porter). Nobody in her immediate or extended family has ever been in jail, and she has no illusions of marrying David while he's doing time. She is not proud of these details—they are offered only as explanation. To her, the significant consequence of her upbringing was that she was "whack": a bore.

She is willing to accept the fact—as much as she hates to have to—that her life is in her own hands now, and that, except for the rent and food for which David paid, it always was. She is getting her GED and for a while enrolled in Continuing Ed. Business courses at night. While the other girls push their understanding of their immediate situation no further than pained confusion, Isabella has it analyzed. "David made me think everybody's a liar. He made me cold-hearted. So if somebody was like, 'Oh, I love you,' I would be like, 'Oh yeah, it doesn't mean nothing to me,'" she says. "I think like a guy now. I think the same way they use girls, I use them. I don't think because a guy offers to pay that it's because I am special anymore. I can talk and get over on guys now. I can say things without meaning them. My cousins are pretty and guys come to pick them up in cars and they are flattered. I tell them, 'Cars are nothing. Take a cab.'"

She became involved with David before he began to deal drugs, but—if she were to stay with guys from her neighborhood—she would go out with only drug dealers again. She doesn't think dealing is admirable, but she finds "the life" exciting: Isabella loves danger and the dark of nights. It is the way to make money. "You know what's the weird thing," Isabella says, "everybody I ever knew is involved and the ones that aren't are bums and they stay home and you have to support them. I don't want to support those guys. For me, it's about independence. I was crazy with David because I got dependent on him. But now I'm independent. Nobody's there but me. I just want the money to come in steady, and to get the money, I have to work. I wasn't happy [with David], but I was secure. He paid the rent and the food."

Lucy's mother is pregnant. Lucy wishes that she were pregnant, too. When Jack first went to jail, he wrote to her about it in letters. "P.S." one said, in slanted writing at the bottom underlined by squiggles, "I hope you are PREG-

NANTI!" lots of flying exclamation points. It is believed to be a sign of deeper love when a guy wants you to have one of his babies.

Lucy believes in Jack. The first night Lucy stayed with him, he didn't make her have sex, and he'd taken her to a hotel. "You know how guys nowadays are. 'Wow, she got kids, she can't tell me no.' He was saying, 'I hope you feel free, you know, to lay down.' And I was. I can still picture to this day how we slept in each other's arms and we just spoke and the next morning when I got up he had pancakes there with strawberries and he fed me in bed. I was like, I guess this was the first time I fell in love with him. I never been treated that way, and I've always wanted to be treated like, you know, a princess, like." When a beeper goes off on a coat in the hallway, Kaitlin's the only one to hear it—over her twin sisters' screaming, over the TV and Latin music and her grandmother's clanging in the kitchen—and she messengers the information straight to Lucy, who is kneeling, sewing a blouse on the bedroom floor.

"Mommy! Mommy! Your beeper went off!" screams Kaitlin, a hostile dare to her mother's face. Kaitlin, five, has already learned that sly way of covering up her need with a tentative curtness. She's a clinging child; when she was two years old, she had gonorrhea in her rectum, and she hates to go to sleep without her mother in the room.

Then Kaitlin long-legs it to the other bedroom, where her four-year-old sisters and the 12-year-old boys from downstairs are piled wrestling on the bed. Kaitlin is hyper tonight at her grandmother's apartment, running in her torn underwear shirt. She is so beautiful, little princess, round bright baby round brown eyes.

"Your beeper, Lucy!" yells Lucy's mother from the kitchen where she's stirring arroz con pollo. It wasn't hers that went off—she checked the stretch waistband where her own beeper hangs just below her large belly. But this time it's not Lucy's either, like it always used to be; this time it's for Marisa, Lucy's cousin.

Marisa is 14 and tall with no hips and nervous, wide-open eyes. Her light-brown skin is pure and soft and she is proud of her new boyfriend. She cannot claim that he's a well-known dealer, and he's not in jail, but he is married. He gave the beeper to her recently—it is her first—after they had a bad fight. He wants to know where Marisa is all the time when she's not with him, and Marisa is anxious to go downstairs and return the call; the apartment does not have a phone.

Marisa hurriedly puts on her coat in the hallway, as Kaitlin darts from the kitchen and loops around Marisa's long legs. But Marisa ignores her, she's got to get down to a pay phone; she's got to call him back.

SOURCE: LeBlanc, Adrian Nicole, "Girlfriends: Three Lives in the Drug Trade." Photographs by Kristine Larsen [not shown here]. *Village Voice*, April 23, 1991, pp. 30-35. Copyright © 1991. Reprinted with permission of the author.

HANDOUT 4: "GIRLFRIENDS: THREE LIVES IN THE DRUG TRADE" QUESTIONS

1. What do the girls get from their relationships with their boyfriends?
2. What do the guys get from their relationships with their girlfriends?
3. Are these girls oppressed in their relationships? Explain.
4. Why do these girls seem to be unsure of their own experiences?
5. What role do beepers play in these girls' lives? How are they like wedding rings? How do they differ from wedding rings?
6. Why did Lucy feel she deserved a beating from Jack? What was worse than the beating, for her? Are her tattoos like a wedding ring? How so? How not?
7. What, if anything, bothers Isabella and Dolores about their boyfriends' dealing?
8. "We love them but we hate them." Is this feeling common in relationships? How are these relationships different from ones you have seen? How are they the same?
9. How have the boys' jail sentences affected the girls? What impact did this have on Isabella's life?
10. We end with Lucy's 14-year-old cousin Marisa. What is the final message of the article?

Students' Questions

1. Is it better to be a "wife" or a "mistress," in your opinion?
2. Is Lucy crazy for staying with Jack? Why does she stay with him?
3. Isabella talks about trading excitement for independence. Which would you choose and why?